

# History Mystery: Women's Suffrage Artifacts



**Recommended Grade Levels:** 4th, 5th Grade

**Estimated Activity Length:** 10-30 minutes

## Activity Overview

You can read a book, but did you know you can also read images and objects? Students will become history detectives and examine some of the State Historical Museum of Iowa's historic objects. Although a history detective may not know all the answers about the historical objects and image, do not be afraid to make observations. This is a thinking and observing activity – even Sherlock Holmes and Nancy Drew had to think things through and were not always right on their first guess. Students will use the questions on the worksheet to guide their inquiry and develop their super sleuth observation skills.

*Additional Educator Note: You are welcome to use as many of the objects as time allows for this activity with students.*

## Instructions for Students

Detectives can solve mysteries by asking the right questions. For this History Mystery, detectives will consider the three questions associated with each historic object and image as they observe it.

- 1 First look.** Pull up the image of the objects and allow 90 seconds to silently observe the object. While looking at the objects, think about the three questions listed on the worksheet, which will be discussed later.
- 2 Start the investigation.** Following the silent observation, ask and answer the first question: What does it look like? Use the [worksheet](#) to write observations.
- 3 Ask the second question.** After finishing your observations from the first question, take another 60 seconds to examine the object. Write your findings and thoughts for the second question.
- 4 Final question.** Take a final 60 seconds to re-examine the object. Keep in mind your observations from the first two questions. Although each individual question may not solve the mystery, by being put together, these smaller observations can help create a greater picture. Write a guess for the object's name, and how it works.
- 5 Check your answers.** To find out more information about the objects, the student or educator can use the answer key on the [last page of this activity](#). Students should not look at the key prior to starting the activity.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# History Mystery: Women's Suffrage

## Object #1



### What does it look like?

*Describe the objects materials, shape, size and colors.*

### Are there any defining marks?

*Look for labels, decals, designs and wear. What do these marks tell you about the object?*

### What is the object? How does it work?

*Make your guess and include your reasons.*

## Object #2



### What does it look like?

*Describe the objects materials, shape, size and colors.*

### Are there any defining marks?

*Look for labels, decals, designs and wear. What do these marks tell you about the object?*

### What is the object? How does it work?

*Make your guess and include your reasons.*

### Object #3



#### What does it look like?

*Describe the objects materials, shape, size and colors.*

#### Are there any defining marks?

*Look for labels, decals, designs and wear. What do these marks tell you about the object?*

#### What is the object? How does it work?

*Make your guess and include your reasons.*



## Historic Image Activity

After viewing this historic image from the State Historical Society of Iowa's archives, answer the questions below to better understand what is happening in the photograph.

### How to Understand Historic Photography (Visual Literacy)

Photographs only capture a moment in time. Viewers of historical photos do not know what happened before or after a photo was taken, and it is important to recognize that viewers only see a segment of time. To more fully understand a historic time period portrayed in photos, look at newspapers or other research materials and compare historic photos from different sources for the same time period.



#### What do you see in the image?

*Describe any people, items or things that draw your attention.*

#### What is happening in the image?

*Describe any actions and the surroundings of the image.*

#### Why do you think the photo was taken or image was made?

# History Mystery Answer Key

**STOP - Do not read this until the end of the activity.**

## **Object #1**

This object is a wooden "379 Pneumatic" pen with a metal tip produced by the American Pencil Co. It is 7.5 x 0.5 inches. To use the pen, the metal tip would need to be dipped into ink. The ink would then sit in the metal tip to then be written on the paper. This pen was used by Iowa Gov. William Harding to sign the Susan B. Anthony Suffrage amendment on July 2, 1919, and granted women the right to vote.

## **Object #2**

This object is a hand fan, and is made from paper stapled to a wood handle. The object is two-sided featuring an image that states "Votes for Women" on one side. The other side lists "Why Women Want to Vote." This fan was produced by Advertising Novelty Company of Newton, Iowa, although the fan lists "Boone, Iowa" under the company name.

## **Object #3**

This object is a pennant created to show support for women's suffrage. The pennant is made out of black and yellow felt material. The color yellow or gold became synonymous with the women's suffrage movement. The color of gold was said to be the "color of light and life, is as the torch that guides our purpose, pure and unswerving." The pennant is made out of black and yellow felt material. The image on the left side of the pennant states "The Suffragists" and depicts a group of women, with a pair holding hands and someone blowing into a horn.

The pennant also has "Woman Suffrage Party" on the top left of the pennant. The group was founded in 1909 in New York by Iowan Carrie Lane Chapman Catt at the Convention of Disfranchised Women. The group not only wanted women's suffrage, but equal workplace rights and wages.

## **Historic Image**

Boone, Iowa, was the location of one of the first suffrage parades in the United States. In this photograph, taken in Boone, Iowa, on October 29, 1908, there is a suffrage parade made up of people carrying banners and flags passes by a large church. One banner held by a parade marcher reads: "Taxation Without Representation Is Tyranny. As True Now As In 1776."